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## A NEW ERA IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ST. LOUIS.

IN every annual report of the St. Louis public schools for many years it has been made clear that the revenue at the disposal of the board of education was insufficient. The situation in St. Louis in regard to funds available for public schools is unlike that of any other large city in the country, and requires a few words of explanation.

The constitution of the state authorizes every local board of education to assess and collect its own taxes for school purposes, so that the board of education never submits its budget of wants to the city government. Under the constitution it levies a certain tax upon every dollar of assessed value, the assessed value being determined by the city assessors. Invariably the board uses the machinery of the city assessor and the city collector, and pays for the service, but the money when collected goes immediately into the treasury of the board. The constitution fixes the limit to the rate of the tax levy, which until last November was four mills upon every dollar. The income of this four-mill tax in St. Louis last year was \$1,622,842.98.

In addition to this four-mill tax, the board has had the income of a certain amount of real estate which it owns as the residue of what was originally given for the establishment of the schools of the city. This real estate yields an annual income of about \$75,000.

Next, the city receives its pro-rata of the state appropriation for public education. This amounted last year to \$176,051.89. Other amounts come into the treasury from what is known as the "merchants' tax" and other sources, amounting last year to \$206,803.73.

This gross income, as is easily seen, was inadequate to the proper education of the children of St. Louis. Nevertheless, the board of education, of which I have been a member for the last six years, has, by strict economy and careful management, been able to put all schools in the best condition and to construct

many excellent school buildings, and to make other improvements in the way of salaries, manual training, supplementary reading, free text-books, etc. But facilities for secondary education have been strikingly deficient. There has been, and now is, but one high school for white children in the whole city. The isolation of this school from the great majority of pupils has led the people to feel that the district schools were virtually the completion of the public-school course. Nevertheless the course of study in these schools has been distinctly preparatory to a system of high schools, only one of which was in existence. Having no high school in view, three-fourths of those enrolled in the second and third grades have generally dropped out before the seventh grade was reached. This early withdrawal has been accentuated at the close of the "free text-book" period, which has been between the fourth and fifth grades. It is needless to go into an argument to show that this state of things has resulted in great part from insufficient school funds.

It is true that in nearly every city and town in the state, by popular vote, the levy for school purposes has been increased beyond four mills, running up as high as eight or ten mills in many cases; but such a levy requires a vote of the "taxpayers" and all the expensive machinery of an election, which in St. Louis is a very serious matter. Consequently, although sadly in need of funds, the board of education in St. Louis has never felt it to be wise to submit a proposition to increase the tax at any election. It has preferred to make systematic efforts to bring about an amendment to the state constitution.

Two years ago this effort culminated in the submission by the general assembly of a constitutional amendment to the people of the state, the purport of which was that the limit of taxation for the public schools should be raised from four mills on a dollar to six mills on a dollar in the three cities of St. Louis, Kansas City, and St. Joseph. The strength of the argument for the adoption of the amendment was found in such points as these: the increased cost of fire-proof buildings required by law; the desirability of extending the free-book plan all through the grades; an increase in the salaries of teachers; the introduction

of manual training and domestic economy; and, above all, the construction, organization, and maintenance of additional high schools.

The amendment was adopted last November by an overwhelming majority, and next month this board will levy six mills upon every dollar of property in the city, thus adding about \$800,000 to its annual income. This addition will increase as the city increases in wealth.

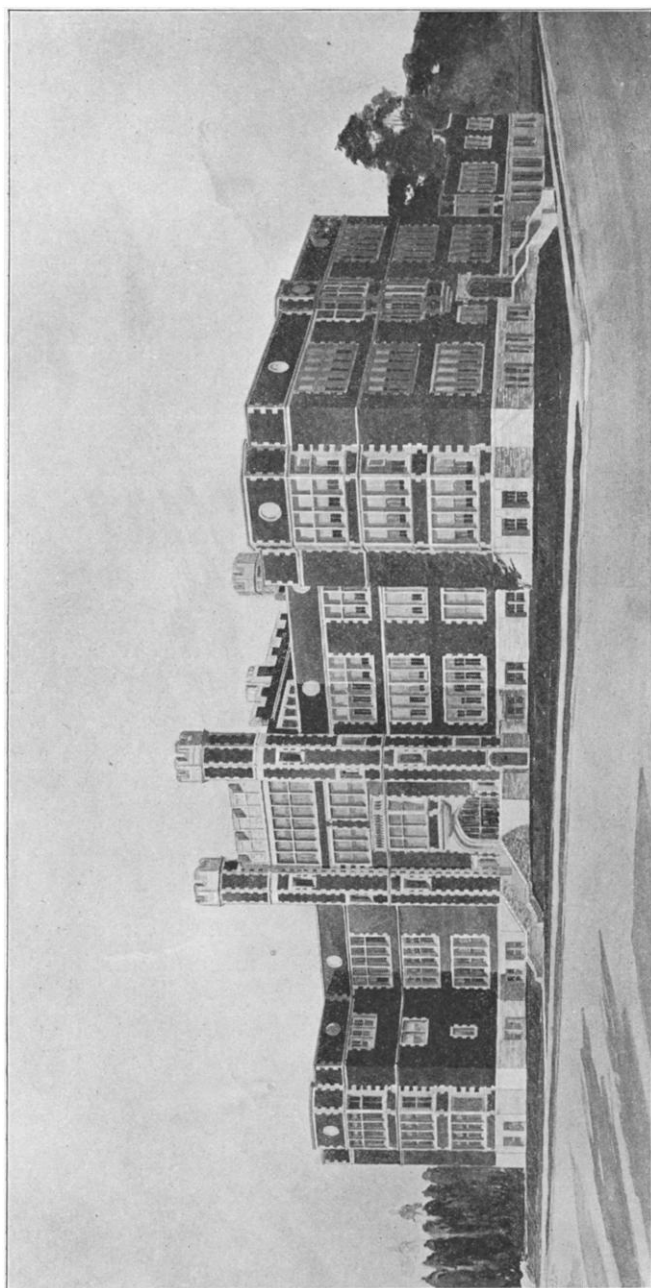
No words can adequately express the importance of this amendment to the educational interests of St. Louis. Almost immediately the board announced free books in all grades after September 1, 1903, and began at once a systematic plan for new buildings and reconstructions. Even before the election, and in anticipation of the adoption of the amendment, it decided to build two new high schools, one in the southern and one in the northern part of the city. Both are now in process of erection, and the work is being pushed as rapidly as possible. Each is a magnificent manual-training high school, to accommodate a thousand pupils, boys and girls, and is to be equipped and furnished in the latest and best style. These schools are very nearly twin schools, though their buildings differ slightly in appearance. Both are shown in accompanying cuts.

The William McKinley Manual Training High School will be ready for opening by February 1, 1904. The building, exclusive of the grounds, and including plumbing, heating, and electrical fitting, costs \$380,064. The equipment is expected to cost about \$30,000.

The James E. Yeatman Manual Training High School costs rather more, on account of the recent increase in the cost of building and labor. The contract figures are for \$392,381, exclusive of the ground. The equipment will cost about the same as in the other school. This school will be ready for opening in September, 1904.

#### THE MCKINLEY HIGH SCHOOL.

Briefly described, the building will have a frontage of 255 feet on Russell avenue, by an extreme depth of 253 feet to



THE WILLIAM MCKINLEY HIGH SCHOOL, ST. LOUIS, MO.

Allen avenue, and will set about 50 feet from the north line of the lot.

The main building will be three stories, with high well-lighted basement ; the center portion of the main building being carried four stories for one additional room and architectural effect.

The shops are in one-story wings inclosing the two courts.

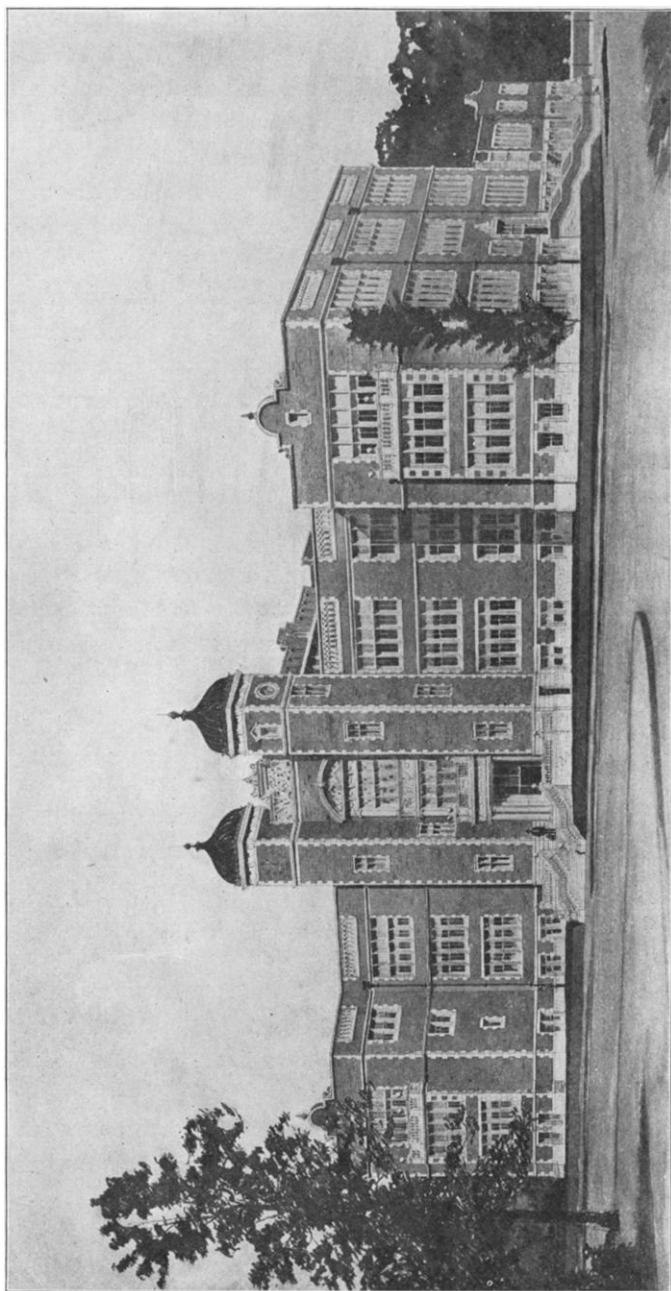
The auditorium is entered from the main corridor, and will seat 750 on the first floor. It has a large stage and two dressing-rooms.

The gallery of the auditorium is entered from the main corridor on the second floor, and will seat 200 pupils or more. Coat-rooms have been provided near the entrance of the auditorium, and in location, entrance, and appointments the auditorium is so arranged that it may be used for evening lectures and general-culture purposes.

There is one chemical laboratory and one physical laboratory, each equipped for a class of twenty-four pupils. To each of these two laboratories is attached a lecture-room, a teachers' laboratory, a store-room for apparatus, and a dark-room for photography. The lecture-rooms are arranged to accommodate about fifty pupils, and may be used independently of the laboratories for recitation purposes. The biological laboratory provides room for a class of twenty-four pupils, and has its teachers' laboratory, aquarium, and store-room.

To provide for the manual training of the girls, there are three rooms set aside for sewing and domestic science. Each of these rooms has its small store-room. Adjacent to one of these domestic-science rooms is a small model dining-room for instruction in serving meals.

There are also two woodworking shops on the first floor—one for carpentry work and one for wood-turning and pattern work. Each of these shops has its wash- and locker-room and tool-room. There is also for these two shops a stock-room where the material is prepared, and a storage-room capable of holding a year's supply of lumber. All supplies for the shops are brought in from the rear of the building, and distributed from these two stock-rooms. Each of these shops is equipped



THE JAMES E. YEATMAN HIGH SCHOOL, ST. LOUIS, MO.

for a class of twenty-four pupils; the maximum capacity of the woodworking shop, however, is thirty-six pupils.

Ascending to the second floor we find ten class-rooms, varying in size and capable of seating sections of twenty-four, forty-eight, and seventy-two pupils, respectively.

In a central location on the second floor a large room for a reference library has been provided with the necessary bookshelves for quite a large collection.

On the third floor may be found six additional class-rooms, in two sizes, capable of seating forty-eight and seventy-two pupils each; a large room 23 feet by 64 feet for free-hand drawing, arranged for sections of forty-eight; a business-room for sections of forty-eight, with the necessary banking-room, business offices, etc.; and a large room for shorthand and typewriting, capable of seating sections of twenty-four; also a room for photography with dark-room.

The central portion of the building is carried up to a fourth floor in the form of a tower, providing a mechanical drawing-room 72 feet by 32 feet, capable of taking sections of forty-eight pupils at one time. This room has its store-rooms and blue-printing room.

In the basement, close to the east and west entrances and properly separated, are the general locker-rooms for each sex. Small locker-rooms have been provided on each floor, as it was found best not to concentrate all lockers in one location. There are also in the basement the general toilet-rooms for girls and boys.

The boiler- and coal-rooms have been placed to the rear and outside of the main building. The space under the auditorium is taken up with the heating and ventilating apparatus, with the necessary electrical equipment for furnishing power for all the shops.

A small amphitheater, seating forty-eight pupils, has been arranged in this room so that the dynamos and engines may be used for illustration and study by classes.

The blacksmithing and machine shops have been placed in the courts. They are entered from the main corridor in the



basement by vestibules, thus preventing any noise penetrating the building. Each shop is 40 feet by 84 feet, and is equipped for sections of twenty-four each. Each has its store-room, tool-room, locker- and wash-room. There is also provided in the basement a large lunch-room and gymnasium. In connection with the gymnasium will be found lockers and shower baths for both boys and girls.

All parts of the building are perfectly lighted. Although the corridor space has been reduced to the minimum, a perfect circulation of classes is provided for.

I do not hesitate to say that visitors to the city during the year 1904 will find the McKinley High School one of the most interesting exhibits to be found in the city of the great fair. Its doors will be open to all visitors, and it is hoped that the city which gave birth to the first manual-training school twenty-four years ago will be found to have a manual-training high school second to none.

Conscious of the fact that many minds have been studying the problem of construction, and many people have had valuable experience in designing and using manual-training high schools, and wishing to get the best results of both study and experience, the board sent Superintendent F. L. Soldan and Building Commissioner W. B. Ittner on a tour of inspection throughout the country, to gather ideas and suggestions which should be embodied in these two new high schools. We think, therefore, that we have something worth seeing in these two new high schools.

As if by one consent, the attendance in all the higher grades of the grammar schools, and the number of those looking forward to the advantages of high-school education, are rapidly increasing.

The board is a unit in its desire to redeem St. Louis from its backward position in regard to school attendance in the higher grades, and it anticipates a rapid filling up of the two new schools as soon as they are opened. Undoubtedly there will soon be a demand for more; this demand the board will be able and happy to meet.

It is with unmingled pleasure that I am able to make this state-

ment, and to proclaim to the whole educational world that, however deficient St. Louis may be in many things, it is not lacking in its indorsement of public education and in its appreciation of the value of what the public schools have to offer throughout their entire course. The board is endeavoring to impress upon every parent the fact that his child is entitled to the entire course of the school; that there is no point short of graduation from the high school where a poor man can say that his child has had education enough, or all that he is entitled to.

Secondary education is rapidly approaching universality, and it will not be long before what is meant by a common-school education, which is the prerogative of every child, will include the four years of a high-school course. It is true that more education costs more money; but it is worth more money, and the community which sees that fact and furnishes the proper means is supremely fortunate.

CALVIN M. WOODWARD.

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